

Washington State Historic Building Level III Mitigation Documentation



Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp Mess Hall

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Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp Mess Hall

Project Information

The Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout mess hall was constructed circa 1962 and put into service in 1963. The building was utilized annually over the next 50 years. The building was maintained and upgraded over time with the majority of upgrading occurring in the past 30 years in response to shifts in BSA commissary practices. The structure was severely damaged during a freak wind event on August 29, 2013. Following an inspection by a structural engineer the building was determined unsafe and the building was removed.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800) a report was prepared for removal of the building (Lancaster 2013). Field inventory for the project involved documentation of the damaged mess hall and two other historic buildings as the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp historic district. Of the three structures documented only the mess hall was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As such, in consultation with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), removal of the National Register eligible structure was deemed an “Adverse Effect” (SHPO Log 072408-12-USFS-OK-WEN). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was subsequently negotiated between the Tonasket Ranger District, the BSA Grand Columbia Council 614, and the Washington SHPO to mitigate adverse effect. Stipulation I of the MOA specified Washington State Level III Mitigation Documentation (3/20/2007) of the mess hall.

State Level III Mitigation

Historic and Common Name

Early accounts refer to the structure as the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Commissary, although it is commonly referred to as the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Mess Hall.

Property Address

The Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Mess Hall is located within the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp at the north end of Bonaparte Lake approximately 19 miles northeast of Tonasket, Washington. The building is located at an elevation of 3613 feet on lands managed by the Tonasket Ranger District, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, USDA Forest Service. The legal location of the property is Section 9, Township 38 North,

Range 30 East, Willamette Meridian, as shown on the Mount Bonaparte, Washington 7.5' USGS Quadrangle Map in Okanogan County, Washington State.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Date of Construction

Historic records suggest that the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Mess Hall was built in 1962 and placed into service the following year, 1963. No formal documentation exists to substantiate these dates, nor can any building plans or blue prints be found concerning the same. The build date of 1962 was found on a hand written document at the Boy Scouts of America, Grand Columbia Council's main office located in Yakima, Washington.

Architectural Description

The structure measured 55 feet 6 inches long by 22 feet 6 inches wide, as evidenced by the remaining foundation, with a twelve/twelve pitched roof. The walls of the structure were constructed of seven inch diameter milled logs purchased from a Colville Confederated Tribe log mill operation located in Nespelem, Washington. It is believed that this same entity constructed the log portion of the facility on-site. The same entity is thought to have constructed the Camp Bonaparte Warehouse/Office building and the Lodge at the Summit Lake Boy Scout Camp located on Disautel Pass.

Wood frame windows with single pane glass were installed in the structure along with solid wood doors. The rafters of the building were built with dimensional lumber employing the use of standard two by fours, two by sixes, and two by eights with quarter inch bolts used at all intersecting points of same. Rafters were spaced twenty-four inches on center. Three quarter inch shiplap was used to sheath the roof with wood cedar shakes placed over the shiplap. Unlike conventional cedar shake roofing construction of the time, no spacing was placed between the rows of shiplap to facilitate ventilation of the cedar shakes; instead each row of shiplap was butted up against the previous row. This may have been done to facilitate snow loading during the winter. The east and west gabled ends of the building were sided with four-quarter inch by twelve inch rough sawn lumber and a sealer/preservative of some kind was applied to same. Once again, there is no documentation to indicate who constructed the rafters and installed the cedar shakes.

The interior layout of the building was designed to provide multiple uses so as to facilitate summer camp operations. The west end of the building housed the staff kitchen with a wood cook stove, single bay kitchen sink, and a handful of upper and lower cabinets. The staff dining area was located on the west end of the building as well as a shower room which contained an electric hot water heater and bathroom sink. The camp office was located next to the staff dining area and it was used for multiple purposes some of which included checking troop units in and out of the camp, ordering food supplies and coordinating program needs to name a few. A first aid room was located directly across from the camp office on the north elevation of the building.

The east end of the structure was dedicated to food storage and the dispersing of same to all camp users including staff. As with many Boy Scout camps back in that time period, “patrol cooking” was the norm. Camp staff employees working in the commissary would portion out food supplies for every meal, based on the number of boys in each patrol, and place those supplies in wooden boxes for transport out to the various camp sites located throughout the camp where the boys would then prepare and cook the meals over wood camp stoves. A two level rack system for the wooden patrol boxes was located about six feet inside the south door of the structure. A walk-in refrigerator was located in the northeast corner of the building and chest freezers were located against its south wall.

For the first twenty years of camp operations, the commissary building saw only minor or minimal changes. Beginning in the early 1980s, the structure began to see significant upgrades so as to maintain its structural integrity as well as to satisfy the changing needs of the boy scouts using the camp for their long-term camping experience. Nationally in the Boy Scouts of America, replacement of patrol cooking with “central dining”, or cafeteria-style dining served as the impetus for gradual changes to the commissary building at Camp Bonaparte

In the early 1980s the original wood kitchen stove located in the northwest portion of the building was removed and replaced with an electric range and vented hood with the vent exhausting out the west gabled end of the building. In the mid 1980s the interior “office” walls were removed to facilitate a larger staff dining area. The original walk-in cooler was replaced with a larger unit. The original rafters were “modified” to facilitate the taller walk-in unit. In the late 1980s a dishwasher with a booster heater was installed in the west end of the structure and appropriate electrical and plumbing modifications were made. In 1989 the cedar shakes on the roof were removed and replaced with metal roofing.

In the early 1990s a grill/oven, convection oven, and range hood were added in the east end of the structure, two windows were removed, and appropriate electrical modifications were made. An external propane tank with underground piping was placed on the north side of the building to supply appliances. A range hood and fire suppression system was installed above the grill/oven and convection oven. Two steam tables were added to the east end of the structure and appropriate electrical modifications were made. Existing patrol cooking food boxes were razed from the east end of the structure. The patrol cooking method continued for most meals at the camp with central dining, and or cafeteria-style dining providing some meals. In the late 1990s all wood doors were replaced with metal doors hinged to open out to satisfy new BSA National Camp Standard requirements. In 1998, sheet rock was installed on the ceiling in the east end of the building to meet Okanogan County Health Department requirements.

In 2004 the interior bathroom and first aid walls were removed to facilitate change from a patrol cooking operation to central/cafeteria-style food service operations. A three-bay stainless steel sink was installed on the west side of the interior wall and appropriate plumbing modifications were made. Plywood and FRP was installed behind the three-bay sink on the interior log wall. In 2005, earthen material was excavated on the southeast

end of the structure and relocated to facilitate food service delivery by semi-tractor/trailer. In 2006, the walk-in refrigerator compressor and blower were replaced.

Significance

Historic records suggest that the commissary building at the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp was built in 1962 and placed into service in 1963. It was then that the camp commenced operations as a long-term summer camp facility serving the scouting youth of the North Central Washington Boy Scout Council. The Grand Columbia Council now serves youth in areas previously covered by the North Central Washington Boy Scout Council.

The Camp Bonaparte Boy Scout Mess Hall served as an important fixture at the camp since its construction. The rustic structure stood in place for over 50 years providing a central location where supplies for meals were stored and distributed, and more recently stored, prepared, and served. During its early years the building also housed office space for camp leaders and a first aid station.

Historical Context

February 9, 2010 marked 100 years since the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was incorporated by William D. Boyce. Boyce modeled the BSA after a scouting organization in England, founded by Robert Stephenson Smith Baden-Powell. The BSA website provides the following antidote pertaining to Boyce's impetus for starting the BSA.

In 1909, Chicago publisher William D. Boyce lost his way in a dense London fog. A young boy came to his aid and guided the man to safety. Boyce offered the boy a tip which he refused explaining, a Scout would not take a tip for doing a good turn. Boyce, impressed with the boy, met with Baden-Powell and the next year incorporated the BSA.

The BSA grew across the nation and by 1925 membership topped one million. As of 2013 the BSA website states that the total number of youth served by the organization is 114,304,389.

Washington State currently hosts seven Boy Scout Councils; the Blue Mountain, Cascade Pacific, Chief Seattle, Grand Columbia, Inland Northwest, Mt. Baker, and Pacific Harbor Councils. The areas served by the seven councils covers Washington State and portions of northern Oregon.

The Grand Columbia Council oversees the following six districts; Apple Valley, Chief Kamiakin, Columbia Basin, Okanogan Valley, Saddle Mountain, and Skookum. From 1924 to 1992 Boy Scouts in the Okanogan County area were part of the now defunct North Central Washington Council.

The four camps currently serving the Grand Columbia Council are Camp Bonaparte, Camp Fife, Camp Scout-a-vista, and Summit Lake (also known as Camp Thunderbird). Three week long camp sessions are hosted at Camp Bonaparte during the month of July.

Original and Current Function

Originally, the interior layout of the building was designed to provide multiple uses so as to facilitate summer camp operations. The west end of the building housed the staff kitchen with a wood cook stove, single bay kitchen sink, and a handful of upper and lower cabinets. The staff dining area was located on the west end of the building as well as a shower room which contained an electric hot water heater and bathroom sink. The camp office was located next to the staff dining area and it was used for multiple purposes some of which included checking troop units in and out of the camp, ordering food supplies and coordinating program needs to name a few. A first aid room was located directly across from the camp office on the north wall of the building. The entire east end of the structure was dedicated to food storage and the dispersing of same to all camp users including staff.

As with many Boy Scout camps in the 1960s, “patrol cooking” was the norm. Camp staff working in the commissary would portion out food supplies for every meal based on the number of boys in each patrol, and place those supplies in wooden boxes for transport out to the various camp sites located throughout the camp where the boys would then prepare and cook the meals over wood camp stoves. A two level rack system for the wooden patrol boxes was located about six feet inside the south door of the structure. A walk-in refrigerator was located in the northeast corner of the building and chest freezers were located against its south wall.

Beginning in the 1980s, the BSA replaced patrol cooking with “central dining” or cafeteria-style dining. To accommodate this change at the Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp modifications to the commissary building began. By the early 2000s the shift to central dining was complete and the building served as a food storage, preparation, and serving facility. Damage sustained during an August 2013 wind storm rendered the building unsafe and it was removed.

Ownership

The Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout mess hall is believed to have been constructed in 1962. The structure was built for use by the Northwest Council Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp. The Tonasket Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest owns the land that the structure was built on. The camp is operated under a special use permit with the Forest Service.

Architect Biography

To date no building permits or architectural blue prints for planning or construction of the building have been located but historic records on file at the Tonasket Ranger District

suggest that plans to construct the building were under way by 1960. One document states, "Attached is a new plan of construction for the proposed service building. This plan appears favorable to use and we recommend substituting it for the original design" (Pritchard 191). The statement goes on to say "The construction period in the special use permit has expired as of April 1961. It is our recommendation that an extension to June 30, 1962 be given. Mr. Stan Grim recently told us that they plan to finish the building this summer" (Pritchard 1961). The above mentioned construction plans have not been relocated. A hand written document filed at the Grand Columbia Council in Yakama, Washington, indicate building completion in 1962.

REFERENCES CITED

Ewert, Kevin

2013a Bonaparte Scout Camp Commissary Building History, dated November 24, 2013. On file at the Tonasket Ranger District, Tonasket, Washington and at the Heritage Program Office of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee.

2013b Camp Bonaparte Commissary Building Historical Narrative, dated December 15, 2013. On file at the Tonasket Ranger District, Tonasket, Washington and at the Heritage Program Office of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee.

Lancaster, Kim

2013 Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp Mess Hall Removal and Salvage Sale, Tonasket Ranger District, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Okanogan County, Washington. Heritage Program Report R2013060803002 on file at Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Headquarters, Wenatchee.

Pritchard, Vernon D.

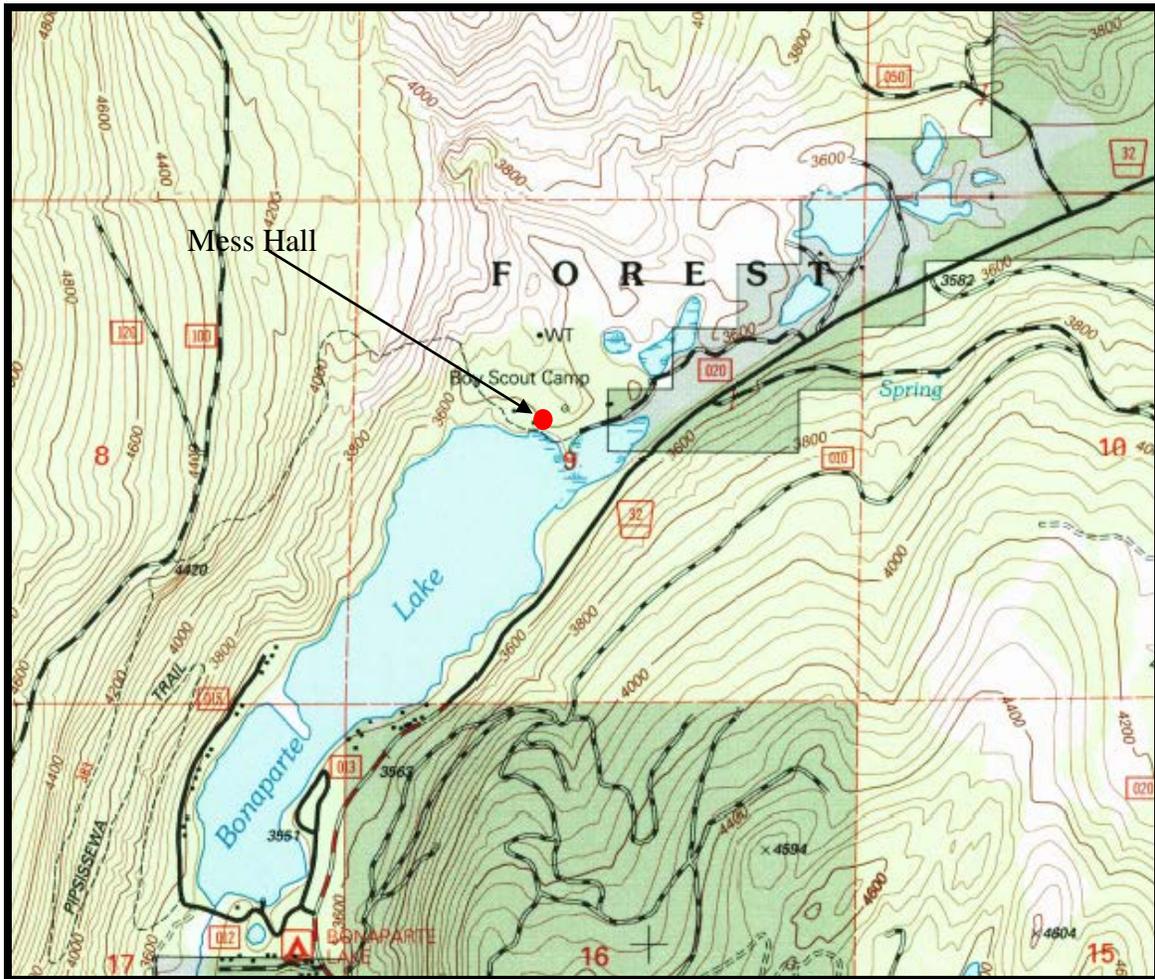
1961 Letter providing information on construction plans for proposed service building. Form 2710 dated June 6, 1961.

Wahrgren, John L,

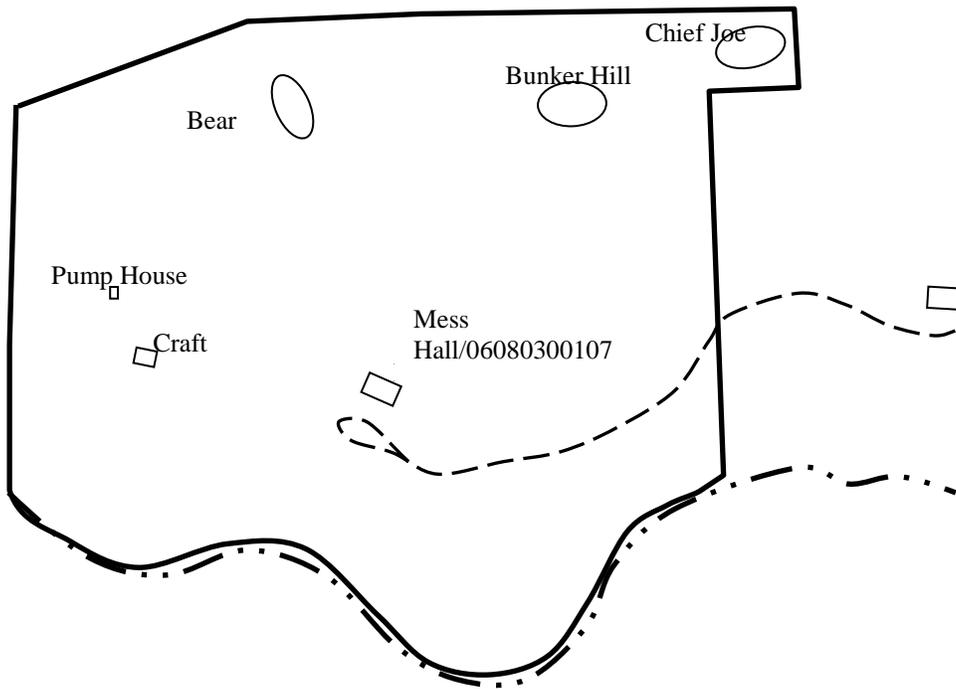
1960 Letter providing information on project status. Form 2710 dated January 12, 1960.

Location

Bonaparte Lake Boy Scout Camp Mess Hall
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District
Okanogan County, Washington
Section 9, Township 38 North, Range 30 East
Mount Bonaparte, Washington 7.5' USGS Quadrangle Map



Lake Bonaparte Boy Scout
Camp
Survey Area
Map Created
by
Kim J. Lancaster



-  Survey Area
-  Lake Shore
-  Road
-  Structures
-  Camp Sites



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PHOTOGRAPHS

Bonaparte Boy Scout Camp Mess hall, Okanogan County. September 18, 2013

- 1) East façade of Mess Hall.
- 2) South façade of Mess Hall.
- 3) West façade of Mess Hall.
- 4) North façade of Mess Hall.
- 5) Interior view of Mess Hall.
- 6) Interior view of Mess Hall.
- 7) View of damage to east half of Mess Hall.
- 8) Close up view of damage to east half of Mess Hall.
- 9) Close up view of damage to east half of Mess Hall.
- 10) Photograph of Mess Hall prior to damage and with shake roof, circa 1980.



Figure 1: East facade of Mess Hall.



Figure 2: South facade of Mess Hall.



Figure 3: West facade of Mess Hall.



Figure 4: North facade of Mess Hall.



Figure 5: Interior view of west half of Mess Hall looking north.



Figure 6: Interior view of west side of Mess Hall looking east.



Figure 7: View of damage to east half of Mess Hall.



Figure 8: Close up view of damage to east half of Mess Hall.



Figure 9: Close up view of damage to east half of Mess Hall.



Figure 10: Photograph of Mess Hall prior to when shake roof was replaced with metal roof in 1989.